

King George V College

First re-inspection monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 130492

Name of lead inspector: Steve Hailstone HMI

Last day of inspection: 15 November 2014

Type of provider: Sixth form college

Address: Scarisbrick New Road
Southport
PR8 6LR

Telephone number: 01704 530601

Monitoring Visit: Main Findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the first re-inspection monitoring visit to King George V College following publication of the most recent inspection report on 23 October 2014, which found the college to be inadequate overall. At the inspection in October, outcomes for learners, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and the effectiveness of leadership and management were judged inadequate. Inspectors graded three subject areas; English and modern foreign languages and business and law were judged to require improvement, and science was judged inadequate. This first monitoring visit focused on the improvement action plan, the culture of low expectations for learners, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, performance management, and governance.

Themes

What progress have leaders and managers made in producing and implementing a clear action plan to address the areas for improvement identified at inspection?

Leaders and managers have produced an action plan quickly to address all of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. However, the action plan is too long, includes unnecessary detail, and focuses too much on developing processes rather than improving practice. Too many actions are not specific enough in stating exactly what managers, teachers and other staff will do, and what the impact will be.

The success criteria listed in the action plan do not make clear how the planned actions will lead to improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for learners. For example, one success criterion is 'performance management systems in place and used effectively'. This indicates the process that will be introduced, but does not express the specific improvements that will result from improved performance management.

The action plan does not enable leaders and managers to monitor fully progress towards achievement of the actions. There is no space on the plan to record progress. Timescales relate only to the completion of each action, and do not indicate at what points managers will review progress towards achieving the intended outcomes.

Priorities for improvement

- The action plan should be re-written urgently. It must identify clearly the specific actions that managers will take to secure improvements rapidly. The success criteria in the plan should state the specific improvements that will result from successful implementation of each action.

- Senior managers must monitor closely the impact of actions in improving the quality of provision and outcomes for learners. The action plan should indicate timescales for implementing each action that include frequent review dates and a clear indication of expected progress at each review date. The re-drafted plan should include a column to record progress.
- Senior managers must establish clear systems to monitor the compliance of staff in implementing improvement actions so that they can take further action when improvements are not rapid enough.

What progress have leaders and managers made in changing the culture of low expectations for learners?

A minority of teachers continue to resist making changes to improve the quality of provision, and have not implemented early improvement actions required by managers in, for example, the assessment of learners' work. Senior managers are aware of this, but they have not yet taken decisive action to address non-compliance.

Staff do not give sufficient attention to ensuring that learners are fully prepared for learning or to developing their understanding of the standards expected in a work environment. Too many learners arrive at lessons with disorganised files and many do not remove their coats during lessons. A small minority of teachers do not maintain an appropriately professional standard of appearance.

The college has one overall target for learners' success and another for the progress that learners make from their starting points. The targets are appropriately challenging and relevant for the AS-level programme. However, they are less relevant for A-level and vocational programmes. They are not sufficiently ambitious to enable the college to return to its previous high level of performance, and do not take sufficient account of progress from AS- to A-level programmes, the requirements of study programmes, or the destinations of learners.

Priorities for improvement

- Quickly take action to remove all instances of non-compliance by teaching staff in implementing improvements.
- Set clear standards to ensure that all learners are prepared for learning and work, including requirements for what they should bring to their lessons, the organisation of their work files, and the removal of coats at the beginning of lessons. Set clear professional standards of appearance for staff. Monitor closely the compliance of learners and staff against the standards, and take appropriate actions to ensure compliance.

- Change the college's overall targets to make them more appropriate for all areas of provision and relevant to the requirements of study programmes.

What progress has the college made in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment?

Since the inspection, senior managers have made structural changes to enable them to improve the quality of provision rapidly. A team of five quality assessors, including the Principal, assistant Principal and three directors, was established quickly with a clear role to work directly with each of their allocated course leaders to identify specific areas for improvement and to monitor the impact of actions taken. They have taken early action to improve the quality of assessment of learners' work and written feedback to learners. However, these actions have had limited success so far. In too many lessons, feedback following assessment is still too brief. The recent changes to enable learners to reflect on their feedback and quickly make improvements have not been implemented consistently, and are having limited success. Too often learners do not receive written feedback on their work and, when they do, this is not always helpful in enabling them to improve further.

Senior managers have introduced a wider range of approaches to evaluating the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. These include regular short observations of lessons, 'learning walks', to enable managers to make a fuller evaluation of the quality of provision, closer scrutiny of the quality of learners' work, and monitoring of the quality of feedback given by teachers and the recording of learners' progress. It is too early yet to evaluate the impact of these actions.

Senior managers have identified accurately where the quality of provision is weak but have not yet taken action to remove poor practice or share the practice of the strongest subject areas. Inspectors carried out short lesson observations with senior managers to evaluate the impact of early actions taken to improve provision. The observations focused on the weaker subject areas. Senior managers agreed with inspectors' findings that too much teaching, learning and assessment is dull, lacks pace, does not inspire or enthuse learners, and fails to meet the individual needs of all learners in the class.

Managers have put in place arrangements to monitor improvements in subject areas. However, the early records of progress only describe actions taken and further planned actions, and do not focus on barriers to progress that managers have identified or how these barriers will be overcome.

Priorities for improvement

- Swiftly take action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment through relevant training and development, rigorous implementation of performance management arrangements to remove poor practice, and sharing best practice in the college.

- Closely monitor the impact of improvement actions taken and take further action if improvement is not swift enough. Identify clearly on the quality monitoring records for subject areas any barriers to progress and actions to overcome barriers.

What progress has been made in strengthening performance management to enable improvements to be made quickly?

Senior managers recognise that performance management is not sufficiently robust. They have sought support very recently from an outstanding sixth form college to improve performance management. It is essential that senior managers quickly strengthen performance management so that it is more rigorous and leads to a significant improvement in the quality of provision and outcomes for learners.

Senior managers have not set minimum expected standards for staff across all aspects of their work, and particularly in relation the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. These need to be introduced and communicated quickly to all staff.

Priorities for improvement

- Quickly strengthen performance management arrangements, including systems to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and the appraisal process.
- Closely monitor the impact of revised arrangements to ensure that they result in a significant and rapid improvement in the quality of provision and outcomes for learners.
- Communicate clearly to all staff the college's minimum expected standards for performance. Take appropriate action through formal procedures to address persistent underperformance.

What progress has been made in strengthening governance?

Governors contribute well to determining the strategic direction of the college and participate actively in the development of the curriculum. However, they do not monitor sufficiently the success of senior managers in implementing major national initiatives, such as the study programme. Governors receive comprehensive data on the college's performance as measured by success rates, but receive insufficient information on how well the college is meeting the needs of individual learners.

The management of the performance of senior managers by governors is not robust enough, and lacks sufficient focus on actions that senior managers need to take to achieve targets and make improvements. Governors have a high level of confidence in senior managers to address identified weaknesses, but they recognise that the level of challenge that they provide is insufficiently rigorous. They have not yet

established how they will ensure that leaders and managers tackle underperformance quickly. Minutes of governors' meetings do not show clearly that governors challenge leaders and managers on key issues, or make requests for senior managers to take actions and report on their impact.

Governors consider that the combined set of skills of members of the board is appropriate and, since the inspection, they have re-appointed three members of the board to new terms of office. However, governors have not analysed in sufficient depth whether the board has the expertise and commitment to respond to the significant challenges the college currently faces. Attendance at board meetings is not high enough, with a minority of board members attending very few meetings.

Priorities for improvement

- Significantly increase the challenge to leaders and managers to make rapid improvements. Monitor closely the impact of actions taken to improve performance, in particular the actions in the post-inspection action plan and the effectiveness of new approaches introduced recently by senior managers, such as the quality assessor role.
- Require leaders and managers to provide comprehensive information about the implementation of major initiatives, such as the study programme. Scrutinise progress rigorously, and ensure that leaders and managers implement such initiatives quickly and successfully.
- Urgently review the skills of members of the board and take action to strengthen the composition of the board so that it has sufficient expertise to support leaders and managers to make improvements rapidly.
- Establish arrangements for governors to review their own performance more robustly and identify areas for improvement. Put in place training and support to ensure that governors are able to provide consistently robust challenge to senior managers.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231 or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014